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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the development of junior high schools in Alberta, including history, comparison with senior high schools, and program development. It also discusses stages of adolescence and teacher preparation for work with junior high students. (LD)

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To Our Reader:

This paper is part of the Department of Secondary Education's CMI Publication Series. It is an occasional paper, and as such we invite you to focus on a dimension of the field of CURRICULUM, MEDIA AND INSTRUCTION. It is also an informal paper and as such it is meant to allow the author to bring to the reader thoughts at some moment of development, from an early exploratory moment to a later more refined moment.

The series hopefully will consist of papers "occasionally" printed as relevant papers come our way. We see them as conversation pieces - "thought-works" that might engage readers and, possibly on occasions author and reader, to come together in a face-to-face "talk-talk".

Thus, we recognize the papers as being essentially incomplete, rooted in the idea that collaborations cannot be exhausted by an actual paper nor any actual reader. We ask you, our reader to collaborate by using the papers to grasp the reason for the essential incompleteness, that is, we ask you to grasp the conception of analysis which makes the papers possible. We ask you this because we feel that these papers themselves, although they have to be used to make the point, are never the point.

The point is, as far as we are concerned, in collaborative dialogue.

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Editor's Note

"From the time of their less than immaculate conception, junior high schools in North America have been embroiled in a continuing series of identity crises."

So begins this Occasional Paper by Jim Bell and his research associate, Peter Ackerman.

Jim Bell, perhaps known more for his contributions and interest in English Education, has for long been a student of issues in Junior High School education. This interest has taken Jim through schools in many states in the United States and in many provinces in Canada, and through literature of many kinds in books and in articles. In the Department of Secondary Education, he, above all, committed his time and energy to the study of the education of early adolescents in the Junior High years. In this quest he probed boldly into the assumptions underlying the rhetoric of and practices in the Junior High Schools.

In this paper the co-authors point to the way in which adults in their interests and within "adult" perspectives invented a category of people that they then labelled "early adolescents," and to the way they have misappropriated the education of these youths by neglecting or refusing to face squarely the purposes of the Junior High School. Their message is a powerful and timely one for us toiling in the name of education in Secondary Schools.

In leaving us this paper at this moment of his retirement from service with the Department and the Faculty he served so long and ably, Jim provides us with a challenge. Through the vehicle of discussion of the early adolescent and the Junior High School, he compels us in a powerful way to reflect upon ourselves as educators. Thus, this paper can be regarded not so much as a call for outward action at this time, but rather as a call for us to look squarely at ourselves, our own being as teachers and as teachers of teachers. Jim says, "It is what teachers are that is so important," and he guides us to ponder the following lines by Guiterman:

"No printed word or spoken plea
Can teach young hearts what man should be,
Not all the books on all the shelves,
But what the teachers are themselves."

Understanding who we are, he seems to be telling us, is the key to understanding whom we teach. It is from that understanding that flows "how and what to teach."

- T. Aoki -

THE EARLY ADOLESCENT AND THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

James B. Bell and Peter Ackerman*

From the time of their less than immaculate conception, junior high schools in North America have been embroiled in a continuing series of identity crises.¹ Each crisis has been, in part at least, associated with the inability to establish a clear operational concept of the junior high school's purposes.

In 1918, the authors of the "Cardinal Principles of Education" proposed a reorganization of the school system in the United States whereby the first six years would be known as elementary education and the second six years as secondary education. The latter would be "designed to meet the needs of pupils approximately 12 to 18 years of age",² and would be divided into a junior period and a senior period. Thus, the foundations for our familiar 6-3-3 pattern were laid.³

The junior high school had two roles to play. First, it was expected to develop a unique program based on the needs of the adolescent. Second, it was expected to act as a partner in implementing the purposes of secondary education. The fact that these two roles were never combined adequately was underscored by Van Til fifty years later:

"from its theoretical inception in commission and committee reports (the junior high) was characterized by conflict as to its role. Some conceived the junior high school as a way of starting certain academic subjects earlier and achieving earlier college entrance; others conceived it as an opportunity to provide the best possible education for young people at a specific age level. Possibly these concepts were not mutually exclusive, but they did conflict ... Thus history helps to explain the conflicting conceptions of the junior high school that persists today.

¹ It is generally understood that the junior high school movement in North America dates from approximately 1910.

² Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education. Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education. Bulletin 1918, No. 35 (Wash.: U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, 1918), p. 13.

³ In Alberta, this pattern was adopted in the mid 1930's.

⁴ Van Til, W.; Vars, G.F.; and Lounsbury, J.H. Modern Education for the Junior High School Years. (2nd Ed.) Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1967, p. 11.

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Also from an historical point of view, two influential factors have worked against a resolution of the conflict. One is the persistent tendency to view all of secondary education as a single unit, while allowing the senior period to serve as the model for the junior period. The other is the legacy of an inaccurate and inadequate understanding of adolescence.

In describing the "invention of the adolescent", Kett has carefully traced the sources of this legacy to the work of G. Stanley Hall. Hall's questionable view of adolescence as essentially a biological process of maturation gave rise to a social definition of an entire age group. It augured the establishment of a 'moratorium' for adolescents: a time when they would be removed from the harsh realities of adult pressures and the "real world".⁵

This orientation had three important and troublesome results: 1) it legitimized the creation of an artificial period during which youngsters could be expected to weather their tumultuous upheavals; 2) it provided an opportunity for the adult community to control the adolescent's environment; 3) it cemented "adolescence" as a unitary phenomenon, thereby ensuring the difficulty of later efforts, particularly by educators, to differentiate between very different phases of adolescence.

As "adolescence" moved steadily towards universalization, the onset and closure of the period was virtually equated with the span of years covered by secondary schooling. The upshot was the solidification (if not reification) of a period of development, the matching of it with a stage in the educational process, and the subsequent encouragement of social institutions, especially the schools, to seize this opportunity (to use Kett's phrase) for "the artful manipulation of the adolescent". Unfortunately, for our present situation, as Kett has pointed out:

. . . the institutions created in the early 20th century survived to become an enduring form of custody for youth long after the ideas and impulses which created them were laid to rest.

⁵Hall's theory of adolescence rested upon the biological principle of recapitulation. The onset of puberty was said to trigger in the individual a fixed stage of upheaval which paralleled an earlier period of development in his race. Cf., Hall, G.S. Adolescence: Its Psychology and Its Relations to Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion, and Education, 2 vols. New York, 1905. and Partridge, G. Genetic Psychology of Education: An Epitome of the Published Educational Writings of President G. Stanley Hall of Clark University. New York, 1912.

⁶That this notion is still with us may be evidenced by the fact that, even today, many adults refer to adolescence as "a time to get through".

⁷Kett, J.F. Rites of Passage. New York: Basic Books, 1977, p. 210.

Against this Hallian backdrop, the dominant goal of secondary education, for at least the first third of this century, was taken to be the preparation of your people for (real) life. This goal encouraged one of the two main themes that controlled the junior high school's development; namely, part of the junior high school's function was to prepare students for senior high school education. In fact, the challenge for the junior high school was to offer a qualitatively different program. The problem was then, and still is, how to wed the two themes while doing justice to both.

In Alberta, no less than elsewhere in North America, history clearly reveals the presence of these two themes. In the 1936 Department of Education Annual Report, H.C. Newland was looking ahead to the coming school year, when the revised programmes for grades 7, 8, and 9 would be fully implemented. Proleptically, he observed that:

The work of the intermediate school is not primarily a preparation for the high school program. It is complete in itself, and will appeal to many hundreds of boys and girls who may never get to high school.

In his report for the following year (1937), Newland took pains to stress that, "The programme and activities of the Intermediate School are specially suited to the needs of the pupils of the 'between ages' - pupils from 11 to 16 years of age".⁹ However, without explicitly acknowledging the potential depth of the tension between them, his remarks suggest a preoccupation with the twin themes already mentioned:

The intermediate school must be a preparatory school for pupils who will proceed to the high school; but at the same time it must serve as a 'finishing school' for pupils who ... are unable to advance beyond grade 9 It is the proper function of the Intermediate school to offer a programme that will appeal to all pupils of the adolescent group; a program that is complete in itself and valuable in its own right, without regard to preparation for the high school; a programme that will, in effect, enable pupils who leave school to do so with a sense of accomplishment.¹⁰ (our emphasis)

⁸Thirty-First Annual Report. Province of Alberta, Department of Education, 1936, p. 14.

⁹Thirty-Second Annual Report. Province of Alberta, Department of Education, 1937, p. 17.

¹⁰ibid., p. 17.

Thus, the intermediate school as established in Alberta was designed to serve two masters: the senior high school and the "between ages" pupils. The former required an emphasis on academic achievement; the latter, "... a programme that combines a diversified curriculum with some of the social activities of daily life" and "teaching procedures and a system of management that are appropriate to the needs of adolescent pupils."¹¹

In the years since 1937, Alberta's junior high schools have felt the full force of two powerful influences. The first is evident in the fact that it is no longer considered acceptable for a youngster to leave school after grade nine. Social, economic and ideological pressures for high school completion have grown enormously. Such pressures are potent forces in shaping the world in which his development is partially shaped. The second is expressed by McMullen in a recent publication of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development:

Throughout most education each stage is strongly and usually harmfully influenced by the one higher. At no point is this more true than between the upper¹² secondary ... and the lower secondary school.

In attempting to break with the antiquated notion of a single homogeneous period of adolescence, the original intermediate school was charged with meeting the special needs of early adolescents. Additionally in attempting to break with the notion that the junior secondary partner should serve merely as a mirror image of the senior partner, the intermediate school was given the responsibility of developing a unique (neither elementary nor high school) program in order to serve early adolescent needs. However, as a result of the increasing emphasis on high school completion and the consequent emphasis on preparation for high school, one of the two original themes in the junior high school's composition has attained much greater prominence than the other.

The overpowering influence of the high school is quite clear. The senior partner has operated first and foremost as an "academic" milieu. Not surprisingly, it has tended to equate schooling with the deliberate pursuit of norm-measured achievement in graded, subject matter competence, the focus being on cognitive performance.

¹¹ Thirty-Second Annual Report. Province of Alberta, Department of Education, 1937, p. 18.

¹² McMullen, T. Innovative Practices in Secondary Education. Paris: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 1978, p. 89.

Seen from a junior high school perspective, the situation might be described thus: in senior high school the student will be judged according to subject matter mastery, and since one purpose of the junior high is to prepare individuals for senior high, it follows that junior high school must concentrate on subject matter mastery as well. The tendency, then, is for the junior high school to function as a proving ground for the senior high school, with the ideal product being a quasi grade ten student.

Allowed to continue unchecked, one consequence of this tendency is the forsaking of the very challenge which lent uniqueness and promise to the junior high school at its creation. That is, to provide a program which would meet all the needs of the early adolescent, not simply the academic-preparatory variety.

To emphasize only the non-academic needs of the early adolescent would be to err again. The legitimacy of the academic-preparatory aspect of the junior high school's role is acknowledged and accepted by all. It is a balance that is required, but it would appear that the balance has never been attained.

To what extent is it true that the junior high schools are mirror images of the senior high school model in Alberta? (See Table 1)

TABLE 1

JUNIOR - SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL COMPARISON		
Features	Junior High Schools	Senior High Schools
General Organization Pattern	By Grade	Essentially by Grade and Subject Level
Program Organization	By Subject (Core and Optional)	By Subject (Required and Elective)
Instructional Units	Standard Time Periods	Standard Time Periods
Instruction	By Subject (Departmentalized)	By Subject (Departmentalized)
Curricular Progression	Predominantly Sequential (in skills and in subjects such as mathematics and science)	Predominantly Sequential
Evaluation	Marks by Subject on Scale of 100	Marks by Subject on Scale of 100
Promotion	By Grade	By Grade or Subject Level

Such similarities of organization suggest similarities of purpose. The purposes of the junior high school, however, are significantly different from those of the senior high school, and these differences should be reflected in their organizational arrangements.

If we accept the premise that the junior high school's task is to meet more than the academic needs of the early adolescent, then an understanding of the full range of early adolescent needs is essential.

As previously noted, educators earlier in this century viewed adolescence as being more or less a homogeneous period. Today, educators recognize that there are clear differences between early and late adolescence. Moreover, educators accept the notion that the early adolescent is already acutely involved in the process of "becoming" in the real world. They acknowledge the polymorphous nature of development during these years, and claim as an important part of their educational goal the fostering of full and healthy individual development.

Even in 1937, Newland drew attention to the unique features of early adolescence and to some of the implications thereof:

The teaching procedures, methods of discipline and administrative control in the intermediate school must be adapted to the peculiar mental, emotional, and physical needs of adolescent pupils. The teachers should be expert in the psychology of adolescence. Teaching procedures should also be adjusted to differences in mentality, special aptitudes, personality and physique.¹³

During 1978 and 1979, over two hundred practicing junior high school teachers were asked to describe the students with whom they worked. Typical of most descriptions was the following:

The junior high school students are, at times, enthusiastic, spontaneous, inquisitive, and overly aggressive. At other times they are apathetic, moody, shy, and quite disturbed. They aren't children, and they aren't adults. They are not sure who they are. They want to be independent and break from the family, but in many cases, they need the security that the family provides. Their most traumatic experience ... is to be rejected by their peers. They must be accepted by the

¹³Thirty-Second Annual Report. Province of Alberta, Department of Education, 1937, p. 18.

group. With the group they try new roles, try to find values, try to find out who they are and how close they are to being independent. They are impatient with adults and society, and they don't understand either.

Both statements underscore the physical, emotional, social and moral, as well as the academic aspects of the early adolescent's life. In addition, they suggest that the most common trait of early adolescence is diversity.

The great diversity among students is recognized and pursued by Tanner, who has explored the physical and biological characteristics of early adolescent growth in some depth. Lending scientific credence to what every junior high school teacher already knows, he maintains that a statement such as "that boy is 14 years old" is "in most context, hopelessly vague".¹⁵ His findings show that while the biologically rooted sequence of physical growth is relatively stable, individual differences in the rate and tempo of growth far exceed similarities. Moreover, these differences can be profound implications for the individual's total development.

Classic examples of the type of physical fact so important to adolescence, yet constantly ignored by our junior high schools because of their adherence to an age-grade sequence of progress, are that girls generally develop two years earlier than boys, and that some boys will have completed their bodily development before other boys of the same chronological age have begun theirs. Notwithstanding, both boys and girls are faced with the same subjects and the same school related demands precisely because their chronological ages are the same.¹⁶ Frequently, the trauma experienced by early adolescents who recognize their own physical inadequacies has an adverse effect upon the individual's social, emotional, and intellectual development.

¹⁴

Survey and interviews conducted by J. Bell in 1978 and 1979.

¹⁵Tanner, J.M. "Sequence, Tempo, and Individual Variations in Growth and Development of Boys and Girls Ages Twelve to Sixteen", in Kagan, J. and Coles, R. (Eds.) Twelve to Sixteen: Early Adolescence. New York: Norton, 1972, p. 8.

¹⁶Without wishing to involve ourselves in an elaborate discussion of questions concerning possible brain-mind relationships, it is interesting to note that Martha Denckla, for one, has suggested that on the basis of current neurological evidence, the debating society proposition that "school favors the right handed female" can be rather easily defended. (Denckla, M.B. "Minimal Brain Disfunctions" in Chall, J.S. and Mirsky, A.F. (eds.) Education and the Brain. NSSE, 77th Yearbook, Part II. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978, p. 249.

Psychologically, early adolescence is a time of normal growth predicaments resulting from natural growth processes, legitimate social tasks, and essential developmental tasks.¹⁷ The organization and program of our junior high schools can do much either to assist or to hinder the early adolescent in understanding and in dealing with such natural strains, or predicaments. For instance, the emerging sense of self that marks the development of the young adolescent is forcefully conveyed through each individual's efforts to establish his own identity while at the same time achieving acceptance as a member of a large group. The potential conflicts inherent in this situation are numerous. More important, they are real. And, if the junior high school is to help its students to deal with their concerns, its program must do more than pay lip service to real life. As Jerome Kagan has observed, the preoccupying motives for adolescents:

... revolve around resolving uncertainty over sexual adequacy, interpersonal power, autonomy of belief and actions, and acceptability to peers. The urgency of these questions dominates the weaker desire to acquire competence at mathematics, history, or English composition. Hence, the school halls exude combinations of apathy and hostility.¹⁸

Another key characteristic of the early adolescent is his growing awareness of and concern with moral issues. Kohlberg has identified and described various types of moral behavior which accompany individual development. He notes that if individual development rather than norm measured achievement is to be the identifying aim of early secondary education, then the junior high school must address itself to making such development real and meaningful to the youngster himself. The effective stimulation of principled moral judgment must occur in a context which recognizes and utilizes (rather than obliterates) the fact of extraordinary heterogeneity in the physical, emotional, social and cognitive development on the part of its population.¹⁹

¹⁷ Mitchell, J.J. The Adolescent Predicament. Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1975.

¹⁸ Kagan, J. "A Conception of Early Adolescence" in Kagan, J. and Coles, R. Twelve to Sixteen: Early Adolescence. New York: Norton, 1972, p. 100.

¹⁹ See, for example, Kohlberg, L. and Gilligan, C. "The Adolescent as a Philosopher: The Discovery of the Self in a Postconventional World", in Kagan and Coles, Op. Cit.

It is tempting, it seems, for educators to fasten upon more or less well defined "stages" of adolescent development and to employ these stages as a general justification for the hierarchical pattern of the junior high school program. However, to do this is to fly in the face of some basic truths. On the evidence supplied by Piaget, it does seem that there are identifiable stages in normal cognitive development (just as there may well be identifiable stages in physical growth, moral development, and psychological maturity). However, Piaget makes it equally clear that if such stages exist at all, they are stages of structure, not of content. The only invariant is the sequence. What varies is individual progress through and within sequences, or stages. In terms of cognitive development specifically, several researchers have concluded that the stage of formal operations may never be reached by a significant percentage of individuals. Moreover, the fact that a "normal" individual may manifest the beginning signs of formal operational capacity by no means carries with it a guarantee that he will progress from there in a straight line, or that he will ever become fully developed at that level of cognitive ability.²⁰ Nonetheless, much of our junior high school curriculum is structured on the assumption that such full and evenly ordered development is normal. McMullen questions the validity of this assumption:

The wisdom of emphasizing hierarchic progressive subjects ... is doubtful. Doubt must also be cast on all 'lock-step methods of learning in which a group of pupils are expected to advance through knowledge in orderly ranks.²¹

Other assumptions may be questioned as well. The assumption that particular, academic deficiencies can be eliminated by simply doubling the amount of time and subject matter is viewed with skepticism. Fred T. Wilhelms suggests that there are better ways to invest time, money, and effort. Wilhelms argues that we could raise the educational dividends if we changed our educational investments. He contends that

²⁰

For evidence concerning the possibility that formal operations do not occur in all individuals, or that even when they do, they may not occur for the same individual in all domains, see, for example: Feldman, C.F., et al. The Development of Adaptive Intelligence. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1974; Kohlberg and Gilligan, op. cit.; Piaget, J. "Intellectual Evolution from Adolescence to Adulthood", Human Development, 1972, 13, 1-12; Dasen, P.R. "Cross-cultural Piagetian Research: A Summary", Journal of Cross-cultural Psychology, 1972, 3, 23-29.

²¹

McMullen, T. Op. Cit., p.23.

the students' ability to achieve could be raised by motivation, by personal concern and attention. While most such efforts to date have been concentrated on elementary students and the disadvantaged, Wilhelms suggests that the same factors would apply to older students and to the "non-disadvantaged". Wilhelms expresses his views:

Almost always, when there is trouble with subject matter, the instinct is to press harder on the subject matter.

It looks as if that's the wrong place to push ... It seems such nonsense to keep pushing harder and harder against the wall of reluctance and disaffection and sheer inability to handle the subject matter when we could do so much more by making our investments in the person.

Having studied the evidence, I am tantalized by the certainty that we would raise both cognitive and personal effectiveness ... What we mostly need is the common sense to drop investments we know don't pay, and the nerve to try some more hopeful ones.²²

If the junior high school is to be successful, it must pay close attention to the unique characteristics of the early adolescents and to the programs and approaches that are designed to deal with those characteristics. The situation in our junior high schools may be much less than optimal in this respect.

The original intentions of our junior high schools were to serve the individual early adolescent and to provide a transition between elementary and senior high school. An examination of current practices, however, suggests that neither of these aims is being successfully achieved. Present programs and approaches do not appear to provide optimum conditions for individual development (see Table II) and the organizational arrangement of the junior high school appears, to duplicate that of the senior high school (see Table I).

Perhaps we have become too complacent. Perhaps, in our complacency, we have forgotten to question established practices in the light of educational purposes. Too few educators, it would appear, have had the courage to ask certain basic questions.

²²Fred T. Wilhelms. NASSP Spotlight, Washington, D.C. National Association of Secondary School Principals, May - June, 1968.

TABLE 11

CHARACTERISTICS OF EARLY ADOLESCENTS	CHARACTERISTICS OF OUR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS
1. Radically different rates of physical growth (accompanying effects on social and emotional development).	1. Students grouped in classes according to chronological age.
2. Radically different rates of development between sexes.	2. Boys and girls grouped together in competitive class situations.
3. Uneven rates and levels of cognitive development.	3. Core subjects which assume even rates and levels of cognitive development.
4. Need for stimulation in real life situations.	4. Constant focus on "in-class" or, at best, "simulated" activities.
5. Need for individual achievement and growing sense of self-esteem in a <u>variety of areas meaningful to the student.</u>	5. Majority of activities occur in subject classes where achievement is measured along one dimension.
6. Need for acceptance by a group.	6. Most student time spent in academic classes where individual differences make acceptance unnaturally difficult.
7. Need to explore interests and capabilities.	7. Optional subjects which must guard against "the mere satisfaction of the pupil's curiosity". ²³

First, if we do not have an adequate, distinctive, generally accepted philosophy for the junior high school, can we expect to witness desirable changes in school organization and program development? A particular philosophy provides a particular sense of direction. If the junior high school is to function as a unique educational enterprise, it must have its own philosophy. In the light of this philosophy programs would be developed and organizational arrangements made.

A distinctive junior high school philosophy might include the following propositions:

- (1) A good junior high school will make provision through program and organization for each child²⁴ to become well known by at least one teacher.
- (2) A good junior high school will plan cooperatively for articulation with elementary and senior high schools, but will exist as a distinct, flexible, unique organization tailored to the special needs of early adolescence.
- (3) A good junior high will provide for a gradual transition from the typical self-contained classroom to the highly departmentalized high school.
- (4) A good junior high school will recognize that no prescribed curriculum can be "best" for all students. Differentiation and adaptation are required.
- (5) A good junior high school will be interested in the life of the early adolescent here and now. "Education is not preparation for life: education is life itself". Therefore, the junior high school will provide a climate, or environment, in which the quality and complexity of the individual's life are recognized. Opportunity for the individual to succeed will be present at all times.

There is a second question that we might ask ourselves. If we do not prepare junior high school teachers and administrators through pre-service and in-service programs, can we expect local development and implementation of improved programs?

²⁴

W. George Batezel, "The Middle School: Philosophy, Program, Organization". The Clearing House. April, 1968.

The teacher is the key to successful operation. By being as knowledgeable about the student as he is about the content and skills to be learned, the teacher can help each student to learn, to discover how to learn, and to deal with his problems. An understanding of the capabilities, interests, and attitudes of each student is necessary if instruction is to be differentiated and personalized.

It is reasonably safe to say that good teachers make good schools. The best junior high school teachers, according to their principals, are eager, enthusiastic, productive, and committed to junior high school teaching. Many of the necessary qualities appear to be personal: the ability to communicate, skill in human relations, honesty, authenticity, a genuine interest in other people.²⁵ It is what teachers are that is so important. Guiterman, in his poem, "Education", says:

No printed word or spoken plea
Can teach young hearts what man should be,
Not all the books on all the shelves,
But what the teachers are themselves.

The greatest asset in a junior high school is a teacher specifically prepared to work with early adolescents - a teacher who views his position with dedication and pride, who regards his students with respect, who recognizes the importance of academic achievement but knows that it alone is not sufficient.

Are we doing an adequate job of preparing teachers for the junior high school? Principals, supervisors, and teachers have identified the junior high school student as being distinctly different from the elementary student as well as from the senior high school student. If these people who work daily with the student are right, it follows that preparation of the prospective junior high school teacher should itself be distinctly different from the preparation of the prospective elementary or senior high school teacher.

What, then, might be included in a program specifically designed for the preparation of junior high school personnel?

- (1) Studies of early adolescence should be given special emphasis. A complete understanding of the developmental stage known as early adolescence is necessary if teachers are to serve effectively as facilitators of learning, curriculum adaptors, and curriculum developers.

25

Descriptions of good junior high teachers were provided by principals and supervisors during interviews conducted by J. Bell in 1978 -79.

- (2) A knowledge of the process of and skills involved in curriculum development and adaptation is essential if the teacher is to program effectively for individual differences.
- (3) The teaching methods and techniques that are required in junior high school should be emphasized and justified. A curriculum can do no more than provide a design for a desired set of learning experiences. It is how these learning experiences are presented and developed that determines the effectiveness of the program.
- (4) Instruction in the teaching of reading is a necessary part of preparation for junior high school teaching. Innumerable reading problems exist and, at present, the teaching personnel are not prepared to deal with such problems. Junior high school teachers are the first to admit that persistent reading problems are the set of many additional problems in student achievement and behavior.
- (5) The establishment of a junior high school philosophy is essential. Not only teachers, but principals, supervisors, and central office administrators as well, must be aware of the purposes and functions of a junior high school.²⁶

The call for improved junior high school education can be heard throughout Western Canada. However, regardless of the structural innovations that may be proposed by administrators and regardless of the amount of money that may be spent by school boards, the degree of improvement will be minimal until teachers and administrators are adequately prepared.

Over forty years ago, educators in Alberta maintained that the junior high school should be characterized by a program specifically designed to meet the academic and the non-academic needs of early adolescents. In order to realize this aim more fully, it is essential that there be adequate preparation of junior high school personnel supported by a distinctive, generally accepted philosophy of junior high school education.

26

In a survey (Bell, 1979), these five features of a junior high school teacher preparation program received ninety-four percent support from junior high school teachers and administrators.